

REMARKS

In the Office Action of October 15, 2004, the Examiner objected to claim 53 and renumbered claims 70-72 as 68-70 to eliminate minor informalities. Applicants thank the Examiner for his close attention to detail in review of the application. Applicants have also canceled claim 68 (as renumbered herein) to eliminate duplication with claim 57.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 6, 7, 9-21, 23, 26-31, 33, 34, 36-45, 47-50, 53-56, 58-63, 64-67 and 69 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(e) as allegedly anticipated by Degreef (U.S. Patent No. 6,742,647). The Examiner also rejected claims 1, 5, 8, 32, 35, 57, and 68 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly anticipated by Raque (U.S. Patent No. 5,697,490). The Examiner rejected claims 51 and 52 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Degreef. Finally, the Examiner stated that claims 22, 24, 25, 46, and 70 included allowable subject matter.

In this Amendment, Applicants have canceled claims 23 and 68, amended claims 1, 24, 25, 28, 49, and 53, and added new claims 71-79. Thus claims 1-22, 24-67, and 69-79 are pending. Claims 1, 28, and 49 are independent claims.

Claims 24 and 25, indicated as including allowable subject matter, both recite the addition of a knuckle conveyor having knuckle links attached in some way to the links recited in claim 1. Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 28, and 49 to recite specifically that the conveyor links recited in those claims are attached to knuckle links of a knuckle conveyor. The independent claims are intended to be a generic recitation of such connection. In contrast, claims 24 and 25 recite two possible species for manner of connection; namely, either connection via platform members or direct connection. It should be understood that the generic recitation of the independent claims would also include some sort of indirect connection involving certain

intermediate parts.

Applicants respectfully submit that, having amended the three independent claims to include the knuckle conveyor links found in allowable claims 24 and 25, each of the independent claims is now allowable over the cited references. Further, Applicants submit that the various claims dependent upon these three independent claims are also in condition for allowance.

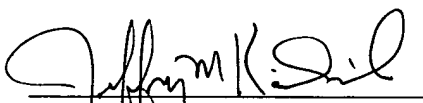
In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request the reconsideration and re-examination of the present application, and the timely allowance of all pending claims.

Finally, Applicants filed an Information Disclosure Statement along with this Amendment. Applicants request consideration of the cited materials and return of initialed Information Disclosure Statement sheets listing such materials.

The undersigned thanks the Examiner for his efforts in this application. If there are any minor questions remaining upon consideration of the Amendment and Information Disclosure Statement, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number appearing below.

Respectfully submitted,

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